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Written Statement: National School Categorisation System 2020/21

Kirsty Williams MS, Minister for Education

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Today I am announcing that, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, I have taken the decision to suspend the National School Categorisation System for the 2020/21 academic year. This means that schools will not be assessed or placed in a colour-coded support category for the forthcoming academic year, and no support category will be published on My Local School in January 2021.

This forms part of our wider response to the pandemic, and reflects the commitment I made to help reduce the burden on schools and the system by removing or relaxing requirements where it is appropriate to do so. I have already temporarily relaxed requirements to undertake national tests and assessments and to report the outcomes, as wells as requirements to undertake moderation. All statutory data collections that would have been due to take place before the school summer holidays which had not started have also been cancelled, and normal arrangements for reporting of Key Stage 4 and post-16 performance measures have been suspended for this year. Estyn has also halted its inspection arrangements until further notice. Together, these steps will help bring certainty to schools about arrangements now and in the autumn. They will also help give schools the space to ensure they are well placed to support learners as we to move to the next phase.

Ensuring that schools are fully and effectively supported going forward is of paramount importance. We are working closely with our strategic partners to plan how this will be undertaken, as set out in our ***Decision Framework for the next phase of education and childcare.***

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